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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABUJA 002617

SIPDIS

NOFORN

DEPT FOR DS/OP/AF, DS/DSS/ITA, DS/PSP/FPD
LAGOS FOR RSO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/15/11

TAGS: ASEC PTER NI

SUBJECT: TFUS3: PETROL BOMB AT KANO BRITISH COUNCIL

REF: A. ABUJA 2508 B. ABUJA 2478

Classified by Ambassador Howard F. Jeter: Reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) On 15 October 2001, Embassy Abuja received information from a reliable source that the British Council in Kano had been the target of a petrol bomb during the early morning hours.

¶2. (C/NF) RSO met British High Commission Security Officer, Keith Rowland, who offered the following details:

-- Despite a GON imposed dusk to dawn curfew, approximately a few minutes after midnight an unspecified number of petrol bombs were thrown over the rear perimeter wall of the British Council in Kano;

-- The petrol bombs landed in an open area of the Council's grounds and were quickly extinguished by local guard force personnel;

-- There were no injuries or damage to property;

-- The British Council has increased its security posture in Kano, and local police are investigating the attack;

-- At this time, there have been no claims of responsibility or arrests by the GON.

¶3. (C/NF) This is the first and only incident in Nigeria targeting an allied forces Mission of which we are aware. We have no reason to view it as other than an isolated incident. Our British colleagues do not view this incident as a precursor to more serious threats. Embassy Abuja had previously identified Kano as a potential hotspot (Ref B). The USG does not have any direct-hire personnel located in Kano, and the attack does not trigger further action based on established trip wires (Ref A). American citizens in Kano report that they are alert and practicing situational awareness while going about their business. Kano is located in northern Nigeria and is a five hour drive from Abuja and thirteen hours from Lagos. The nearest Operation Focus Relief (OFR) forces are in Birnin-Kebbi, about six hours away.

¶4. (C/NF) RSO and Post management agree that the situation bears close monitoring. An EAC meeting will soon be convened to discuss the attack's implications on Abuja, if any. The security posture at all USG installations in Abuja remains at the highest levels.

Jeter